



The Old Ironsides Report



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TF 1AD helps kick off Iraq's new school year

KATARINA KRATOVAC, Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq - At the western end of Baghdad, clapping Iraqi children usher in the start of a new school year with the help of donated American supplies. Downtown, an elementary school principal holds her head in despair - the promised textbooks never arrived and she has nothing to offer her 300 pupils.

The contrast underscores the difficulties in rebuilding a long neglected education system, as Iraq's schoolrooms opened their doors Wednesday for a new term.

As elsewhere in this fractured country, the struggles are daunting. There are still pressing infrastructure needs and security concerns for the schools, and the process of eradicating Saddam's ideology is yet in early stages.

Iraqi teachers are miserably paid. Under Saddam, teachers earned the equivalent of \$5 to \$13 a month, according to Charles Heatley, a coalition spokesman. The new administration has made an effort to change that, with monthly wages between \$67 and \$335.

Coalition officials also had hoped to purge references to the ousted Iraqi leader from textbooks in time for the new school year. The United Nations educational agency arranged for the printing of 72 million textbooks with references to Saddam removed.

Yet Iraqi officials say most of them have not arrived. At the Ministry of Education's warehouse in southern Baghdad, Hussein Ali Abid showed off a handful of high school math and literature textbooks - all with Saddam's picture on the first page. "I wish I could provide the new books, but look, this is all I have," he said.

Still, it was all smiles and cheers Wednesday in the al-Furat neighborhood - once a Baath Party stronghold across the road from the Baghdad International Airport - as pupils showed up for registration and orientation. Classes resume Saturday.

Resounding booms of leftover explosives being detonated nearby did not seem to bother the 1,000 children or their mothers, proudly watching the opening ceremony at the Dufaf al-Neil school.

Outside, security was enforced by two American tanks, nine Humvees and barbed wire on the road up to the school.

The damage to the school in the citywide looting after Saddam's ouster five months ago has been largely repaired. However, many of the surrounding homes, where the worst of fighting for the Iraqi capital occurred, still bear the scars.

Inside the refurbished school, portraits of Saddam no longer hang over the blackboards. Children are no longer forced to chant "Long Live Saddam" when a visitor walks in. Instead, they giggled in the squeaky new desks.



Two schoolgirls hold up markers they received their first day of school at Dufaf Al-Neil primary school in Baghdad. Soldiers from 1st Armored Division's 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, passed out school supplies, hygiene products and toys to the children Oct. 1. Photo by Spc. Shauna McRoberts, 1 AD PAO

His eyes sparkling, Shamal Siman, 9, watched as soldiers from the 1st Armored Division unloaded truckloads of new crayons, magic markers and watercolors, donated by U.S. military families back home.

"They will also give us brand new bags," the third-grader said.

Principal Jabar Al-Amri said it made "his heart sing" to see the schoolchildren - his "sons and daughters" - so happy.

Iraqi police Gen. Mahmud Al-Jaburi sang America's praises. "No one else helped us, only the Americans. I want to say thank you to so many people across an ocean. We shall take good care of this school."

But amid the celebrations, history teacher Rabha, who would only give her first name, said she was still very worried.

"God willing, things will be better," she said. "But I live far away from here and the streets are not safe."

Things weren't so good at the al-Karkh primary school, located in central Baghdad near the bombed-out Foreign Ministry.

Principal Fahria Whayeb, 60, was worried because neither the furniture nor the promised textbooks had arrived. Workers were still busy clearing out the debris.

"My staff can clean up and make this look decent but we can't supply the new books" for the school's 300 students, she said.

Mothers with children trickled in slowly. Wesam, 24, clutched the hand of her eldest daughter Nebe, 6, concerned over recent kidnapping reports.

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NEWS

Schwarzenegger Says He's 'Behaved Badly'

SAN DIEGO (AP) - Gubernatorial front-runner Arnold Schwarzenegger acknowledged that he has "behaved badly" to women and offered an apology Thursday.

Schwarzenegger's remarks, as he kicked off a four-day bus tour of the state in the final days of the recall campaign, came after a Los Angeles Times story published Thursday in which six women accused him of sexually harassing and groping them.

N. Korea Says It Is Making Nuclear Bombs

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) - North Korea said Thursday it is using plutonium extracted from spent nuclear fuel rods to make atomic weapons, a move that could escalate tensions on the Korean peninsula and raise the stakes in Pyongyang's standoff with the United States.

North Korea has said before that it completed reprocessing its pool of 8,000 spent rods, but Thursday marked the first claim that it is using plutonium yielded from the rods to make nuclear weapons. U.S. and South Korean officials have been skeptical that the rods have been reprocessed.

FBI Creates Team to Investigate CIA Leak

WASHINGTON (AP) - The FBI's first task in the investigation of a leak that disclosed the name of a CIA officer is to narrow the list of government officials who may have known her identity, a number that could be in the hundreds.

Meanwhile, an ABC-Washington Post poll found 69 percent of Americans, including 52 percent of Republicans, believe a special counsel should be appointed. A substantial majority, 72 percent, said it's likely that someone in the White House leaked the classified information, but only 34 percent think it's likely Bush knew about the leak beforehand.

Chaplain's Thought for the Day: **Hard Times**

Kindness and intelligence don't always deliver us from the pitfalls and traps. --Barbara Grizzuti Harrison

Being human means we'll have hard times along with pleasant ones. Whether with friends, at work, or at home, we'll find reasons for sadness or anger as easily as for laughter. In every part of our lives, we're offered just what we need for growth.

Being the best we know how to be doesn't mean we'll escape confusion or pain. Through the troubling times we learn to trust in God; we learn patience; we learn to let go and let God decide outcomes.

The troubling times offer us growth and serenity, our keys to happiness.

SPORTS

A's score all 5 runs in second

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) -- Barry Zito showed the importance of a good night's rest.

Zito struck out nine over seven dominant innings as the Oakland Athletics pushed the bleary-eyed Boston Red Sox to the brink of playoff elimination Thursday, scoring all their runs in the second inning of a 5-1 victory in Game 2 of their division series.

The teams took the field for batting practice slightly more than 10 hours after Eric Chavez scored the winning run in the series opener, a 5-4, 12-inning victory for the A's that ended on Ramon Hernandez's daring bases-loaded bunt.

Zito had already been sent home to bed well before Hernandez won it, and the relaxed left-hander showed it as he pitched Oakland to a 2-0 lead.

The Cy Young winner's looping curveball was in top form, and Boston's record-setting offense spent the afternoon flailing at his best stuff.

Game 3 is Saturday at Fenway Park. Derek Lowe, the losing pitcher in the opener, will start against Ted Lilly.

Garcia Leads America Express by a Stroke

WOODSTOCK, Ga. (AP) -- Sergio Garcia prefers playing the tough courses, where par is a good score and he doesn't have to worry about being left behind whenever he misses a putt.

He felt right at home Thursday in the American Express Championship, where his 5-under 65 was one of only 12 scores under par and gave him a one-stroke lead over Rocco Mediate and Tim Herron.

Defending champion Tiger Woods made two long birdie putts and five good par saves and was another stroke back at 67.

"I've always felt much better on difficult courses because I don't feel like it's so much of a putting competition," Garcia said. "I'm a bit more relaxed on the course. I know I don't have to go for every pin, only the ones I feel comfortable with."

Safety Tip of the day... ***Wear Your Kevlar Properly "It Will Save Your Life"***

